

Feeding Your Baby

4 Through 5 Months

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Introduction

♥This guide provides nutrition information for parents and caretakers of infants. Nutrition is important for the physical and mental development of your infant.

♥Eating habits are formed at a very early age. Parents can help infants develop good eating habits by making nutritious foods available in a pleasant setting.

♥This resource is only a guide. Each baby's eating pattern varies according to growth rate, age, activity, and many other factors.

♥If you have any questions about the information in this guide, ask your dietitian, nutritionist, or doctor.



Helpful Hints

♥It's the parents' job to decide what and how food is given to the child, but it is up to the child to decide how much or whether to eat. Your baby will let you know when she is hungry or full. Watch for and respect these cues. A baby's eating can vary considerably day to day, so don't panic! Her rate of growth is the best way to determine if the amount she is eating is enough.

♥Have your baby sit up straight and face forward while eating to make swallowing easier to avoid choking.

♥Feed your baby at her own pace. Don't try to go faster or slower.

♥Offer your baby small servings of food. Large servings tend to discourage a baby.

Feeding Tips for 4 Months

♥The most reasonable time to begin introducing solid foods into your baby's diet is when she is ready for them; somewhere between four and six months. To tell whether your baby is ready for solid foods, ask yourself these questions:

- ♥ Can your baby move her tongue back and forth and swallow nonliquid foods given to her on a spoon?
- ♥ Does she watch the food, open her mouth and lean forward to indicate a desire for food, or lean back and turn away to signal enough?
- ♥ Can your baby hold her head up or sit up?

♥ If you can answer yes to each of these questions, then this is the proper time to introduce solid foods to baby.

A Guide to Feeding Your Infant

	4-5 Months	5-6 Months
Breastfeeding	5-8 feedings every 24 hours or on demand	5-8 feedings every 24 hours or on demand
Or		
Iron-Fortified Formula	32-34 ounces every 24 hours	32-34 ounces every 24 hours
Iron-Fortified Infant Cereal	1-2 Tablespoons	2-3 Tablespoons
Vegetables	NONE	1-3 Tablespoons

Feeding at 4 Months, Continued

- ♥Begin with one tablespoon of dry cereal mixed with two to three tablespoons of breastmilk or formula; make it thin. As the baby gets older, you can gradually make the cereal thicker and increase the amount to two tablespoons of dry cereal a day.
- ♥Feed cereal from a small spoon, not in a bottle or infant feeder. Throw away uneaten cereal after the feeding.
- ♥Your baby does not need sugar, honey, corn syrup, or margarine in the cereal. Honey and corn syrup can cause food poisoning in children younger than one year of age. This type of food poisoning called botulism can be fatal.

Steps for the First Feeding

- ♥Try to relax.
- ♥Make sure the baby is a little hungry.
- ♥Hold the baby on your lap in a sitting position, supporting the back with your arm, or put her in a high chair if she is able to sit up on her own.
- ♥Use a small skinny spoon to fit the baby's mouth. There should be no sharp edges.
- ♥Put a small amount of food on the spoon. Put the food toward the back of the baby's mouth.
- ♥The baby may spit out the food at first. Don't panic. This is because she may not know how to chew or swallow it yet.
- ♥Give the baby another bite even if she spits out the first bite.



At 4 Months, add...

Infant Cereal

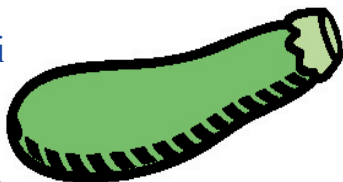
- ♥Cereals are a baby's first solid food. Eating solids is a new experience for your baby. Cereals give energy for growth and iron for a healthy baby.
- ♥To avoid possible allergic reactions such as diarrhea, vomiting, and rash, offer single-grain baby cereals such as rice, barley, and oatmeal. Wait until your baby is eight months old to give wheat, mixed, and high protein cereals.
- ♥If the baby will not eat something, do not force her. Wait and try feeding her later.
- ♥The baby needs to learn to eat from a spoon. NEVER mix the baby's food with her formula in a bottle or infant feeder. This habit can lead to baby bottle tooth decay.
- ♥Later your child will begin to grab for the spoon. Then it is time for the child to learn to feed herself. This will be messy. Take it slowly. Try to be calm while your child learns.



At 5 Months, add...

Vegetables

♥Vegetables are a source of vitamins and minerals necessary for growth and development. They also provide bulk to prevent constipation.



♥Begin with one tablespoon of vegetables and increase to three tablespoons.

♥Start with plain, strained vegetables, one at a time. Yellow or orange vegetables such as carrots, squash, and sweet potatoes are often better liked at first. Later offer peas, green beans, spinach, and beets.

♥Try the same vegetable for three to five days. Watch for any reactions such as diarrhea, vomiting, and rash. Do not offer two new foods at the same time.



♥Homemade baby foods are easy to make and can save money. Do not add salt, extra fat, and spices to your baby's food.

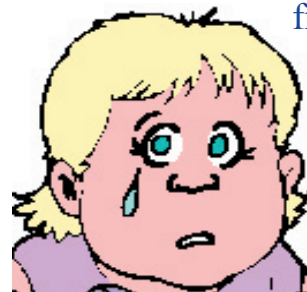
♥Opened jars of commercially prepared baby food should be refrigerated immediately and used within 48 hours.

♥Heat only the amount of food your baby needs for each feeding. Do not heat the whole jar.



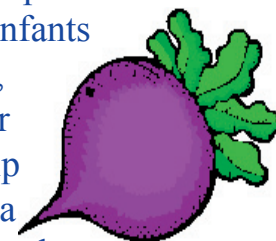
Feeding at 5 Months, Continued

♥Foods should be fed from a small dish, not directly from the jar. Do not save partially eaten food for the next feeding. This is because bacteria from the baby's mouth can contaminate the food remaining in the dish.



Remember to refrigerate unused food immediately.

♥By this age, spinach, carrots, and turnip or collard greens, should be tolerated. For some infants who are sensitive to high nitrate levels, only commercially prepared strained or junior spinach, beets, carrots, and turnip or collard greens should be served. As a general precaution for all infants, feed only 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time.



♥Read commercially prepared baby food labels carefully. Use plain, single-ingredient, not mixed, foods.

